

# CHAPTER 5

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*Sunset at Eagle Island.*



**PARK SIGNIFICANCE**

The location of Eagle Island State Park with its wide open spaces makes it significant to the local and regional community. The park occupies a portion of Eagle Island, and both its northern and southern borders are formed by channels of the Boise River. The park is one of the few publicly owned parcels of land west of Boise with direct access to the Boise River. The park

**Eagle Island State Park  
Vision Statement**

Eagle Island State Park will be a regionally significant recreation resource and a land and water trail hub. Year-round recreational opportunities will be provided in a pastoral setting through sensitive development and restoration of the riverine environment. The park will be an outdoor learning center focusing on the Boise River and its floodplain.

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is a large open space in an area that is undergoing rapid conversion from agricultural to residential and business use.

When the land was transferred from the Department of Corrections to the Department of Parks and Recreation in 1978, several park proponents cited those attributes, which have become increasingly valuable as the population and developed areas have grown in the Treasure Valley. These values are captured in the vision and mission statements for Eagle Island State Park.

A vision statement is created to “capture a picture of the park’s desired future,” (Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Master Plan Guidelines, 1999). It is a statement that capitalizes on the attributes of the Park and identifies possibilities for the future.

**PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM**

The Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation has adopted a classification system establishing four park categories (IDPR, State Park Classification and Resource Area Designation System, 1999). They are: Natural Park, Recreation Park, Heritage Park, and Recreation Trailway. Each classification has unique criteria, a distinct purpose, compatible uses, appropriate development intensity, and specific management principles. In determining the classification of a park, consideration is also given to any national, state and regional designations, which may already exist in regard to the park. A classification system allows the programming, orderly development and appropriate use of the park lands based on management policies.



### **Classification of Eagle Island State Park**

Eagle Island State Park has numerous values, including historical and natural. However, its location in the most populous area of the state, the existing development, and the site's size and potential as a trail and water hub place it in the Recreation Park category.

### **Recreation Park Purpose**

In the IDPR classification system, Recreation Parks are established to provide areas that are adaptable to a broad range of intensive outdoor recreation uses for large numbers of people.

### **Resource and Site Qualifications**

Recreation Parks offer a range of outdoor recreation opportunities that may not be provided by county or municipal entities. The land area and other resources of a Recreation Park are extensive enough to provide a wide range of recreational opportunities capable of withstanding intensive use by large numbers of people.

The resource base should provide recreation opportunities significant enough to assure regional or statewide patronage. Recreation Parks should not be a substitute for urban park facilities, such as softball complexes, soccer fields, etc. Recreation Parks are intended to supplement municipal, county and regional facilities and should not be established in lieu of them. A park may contain resource values other than those for which the park received its overall classification. These secondary resources should be of a lesser magnitude than the resources for which the park received its overall classification. The use and protection of these secondary resources will be addressed by subsequent resource area designations.

The existence of these secondary resources should not unduly affect the determination of the overall park classification.

### **Location and Distribution**

Preferences should be given to locating recreation parks:

- Within 1 to 2 hours driving distance from large population concentrations and/or natural resources which attract large numbers of users.
- In areas which have a serious deficiency in both private and public outdoor recreation opportunities.
- In areas where the establishment of a Recreation Park shifts undesirably high usage from more fragile components of the state park system.
- In areas which can provide sufficient revenue generation potential to offset operational cost.

### **Management Principles**

**Resource Management** – Outdoor recreation is the primary management objective. Recreation parks are intended to be intensively used, developed sites providing diverse recreation opportunities for a large number of people.

**Compatible uses** – Primary emphasis in a Recreation Park shall be placed on active participation in outdoor recreation. A Recreation Park is a place for participating in those outdoor recreational activities which can be accommodated without detriment to the natural character and features of the park.

In the broad sense, park use falls predominantly in the active, intensive portion of the recreational spectrum. Compatible uses could include group and individual camping, boating, fishing, special events, outdoor recreation club activities, outdoor concerts and large group



programs, reunions and retreats, course and field events, hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, equestrian use, OHV use, interpretive programming, picnicking and swimming.

The management and use of Recreation Parks should remain somewhat flexible. New forms of active outdoor recreation will be developed in the future and may become very popular. These may have to be accommodated within reasonable limits, to protect more sensitive components of the state park system.

areas, outdoor club facilities, non-motorized trails, motorized trails, trailhead facilities, staff housing areas, maintenance yards and other similar facilities.

**PARK MISSION STATEMENT**

Whereas the vision statement provides a desired future condition for a park, the mission statement describes the park's current focus (IDPR, Master Plan Guidelines, 1999). The mission statement is reviewed regularly by park staff to check that its fo-

***Eagle Island State Park  
Mission Statement***

*Eagle Island State Park includes 546 acres of important open space surrounded by a rapidly suburbanizing and urbanizing area. The park functions to provide high quality, safe recreational opportunities for Idaho's citizens and visitors while maintaining the unique rural atmosphere and wetland habitats through wise resource management and conservation. The park staff provides opportunities for nature education at the park and in the local community.*

Physical Developments – Facilities required for the health, safety and protection of users, as well as those consistent with compatible uses shall be provided. Location, scale and design of all facilities shall be directed toward satisfying visitor needs and minimizing the potential for adjacent use conflicts. Facilities should support customer services, enhance the visitor's experience and provide for staff operational needs. Typical development might include: group campgrounds, individual camp sites, lodges, golf courses, marina facilities, boat launches, swimming beaches, visitor/interpretive centers, large group amphitheaters, program

cus is accurately described. The Eagle Island State Park mission statement was revised slightly in March 2000 by the PRT during this master planning process.

**Mission Statement**

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### MASTER PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Master Plan Guidelines (IDPR, 1999) suggested a number of elements into which goals for a park should be created. The goals were developed from analyzing the vision and mission statements, the re-

source inventory and the input from both the public and department staff. The objectives give more specific guidance on how to meet the goals. The objectives were developed from public and staff input.

The goals and objectives are for the life of the plan, about ten years. The categories of goals were suggested in the master plan guidelines and reflect the agency's mission and concerns.



*Entrance to Eagle Island State Park.*



*View from on top the slide hill.*



A. Natural Resources

- A1. Emphasize and protect the riparian/riverine/floodplain environments and functions.
  - A1.1 Minimize disturbance in riparian areas.
  - A1.2 Complete a riparian inventory and management plan.
  - A1.3 Protect the floodway and floodplain from encroachment, which would alter natural flood functions.
  - A1.4 Provide designated access points to the river.
- A2. Use wetlands for water quality improvement.
  - A2.1 Treat storm water runoff from park development in wetlands.
  - A2.2 Use park wetlands for pollution trading on the Boise River.
- A3. Enhance natural resources, including air and water quality and wildlife habitat.
  - A3.1 Complete a habitat inventory and plan.
  - A3.2 Plant trees to balance potential air quality declines from bringing additional vehicles into the park.
  - A3.3 Use a variety of wetland plants which uptake various pollutants.

B. Community

- B1. Provide tertiary treatment for Eagle Sewer District effluent in a series of wetlands.
  - B1.1 Conduct a feasibility study of treating sewage effluent on park property.
  - B1.2 If feasible, construct treatment wetlands on the north side of the park.

C. Transportation

- C1. Complete the new park entrance.
  - C1.1 Construct a new bridge, or find an historic bridge, for the new entry road.
- C2. Minimize the length of paved road within the park.

D. Health and Safety

- D1. Provide emergency access to the Boise River.
  - D1.1 Provide emergency access to the north channel at the Greenbelt and boater trailheads.
  - D1.2 Provide emergency access to the south channel at a designated river access point, if emergency access at the downstream sportsman's access is not sufficient.
  - D1.3 Maintain emergency access at the former main entrance on Hatchery Road.

E. Education and Interpretation

- E1. Create an education center that focuses on the Boise River and its floodplain.
  - E1.1 Develop a full-service education center including laboratory, classroom, dormitory, kitchen, and meeting space.
- E2. Adaptively reuse the remaining prison farm buildings for the education and interpretation programs.
  - E2.1 Conduct a feasibility study, including structural soundness, and best adaptive uses, of the prison farm buildings.



- E3. Interpret and monitor the riparian/riverine/floodplain environments and functions.
  - E3.1 Interpret flooding and use flooding as an educational opportunity.
  - E3.2 Interpret wetland functions and the value of the functions to humans.
  - E3.3 Develop an education and monitoring program around flooding, wetlands and water quality.
- E4. Interpret the prehistoric and historic uses of the site, including the prison farm.
  - E4.1 Interpret the flooding history of the Boise River, the creation of Eagle Island, and how the hydrology of the river affected settlement patterns.
  - E4.2 Interpret the use of the site as a prison farm.
  - E4.3 Interpret how agriculture shaped land and water use in the Boise River Valley.
- E5. Seek opportunities to be involved in local education.
  - E5.1 Create partnerships with educational groups such as Project WET, GLOBE and other water-related or environmental education projects.
  - E5.2 Make the educational facilities available to groups to learn about the Boise River, flooding, wetlands, water quality, riparian vegetation, habitats, etc.
  - E5.3 Develop partnerships with other agencies, such as the adjacent Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

#### F. Recreation

- F1. Provide varied opportunities and places to interact with nature and the Boise River.
  - F1.1 Provide designated access places to the river.
  - F1.2 Route trails along wetlands, the river, and ponds.
  - F1.3 Provide seating and blinds where people can observe birds and wildlife.
- F2. Provide diverse, open-air gathering and recreational opportunities.
  - F2.1 Develop trailheads for cyclists and boaters.
  - F2.2 Develop a group tent camping area with parking, restrooms, shelter, power and water.
  - F2.3 Develop dispersed picnic sites of varying sizes.
  - F2.4 Develop a group picnic area with access to parking, restrooms, shelter, power and water.
  - F2.5 Improve fishing opportunities in the park on ponds and streams and along the river.
  - F2.6 Develop an equestrian center with an unloading area, parking and arena.
  - F2.7 Develop a wetlands-oriented, environmentally friendly 18-hole golf course that incorporates wetland research and education as well as recreation.
- F3. Accommodate as many varied uses as possible without compromising anyone's experience.
  - F3.1 Separate uses through seasonal programming and management.
  - F3.2 Separate uses spatially.
- F4. Development will promote varied uses, separated by natural features, to allow day and night use.
  - F4.1 Use water features, such as wetlands and ponds, to separate uses.
  - F4.2 Create topography to alter views and separate uses.
  - F4.3 Plant masses of vegetation to screen and separate uses.



F5. Maintain and enhance existing recreational uses at the park.

F5.1 Add a water feature for small children by the water slide.

F5.2 Build a staff office near the developed recreation area.

F5.3 Build an amphitheater on the swimming pool berm.

F5.4 Add another restroom.

F5.5 Expand the parking areas to accommodate more users.

G. Trails

G1. The park will be a land and water hub for the Treasure Valley.

G1.1 Connect to the Greenbelt and bring it through the park.

G1.2 Provide trail access to and through the park other than the main entrance.

G1.3 Develop a trailhead, with services, where bicyclists can access the Greenbelt.

G1.4 Develop a trailhead, with services, and a staging area for boaters.

G1.5 Provide portages around diversion structures adjacent to park property.

G2. Provide a trail system within the park that accommodates different kinds of users.

G2.1 Create separate path systems for different users, e.g., equestrians, cyclists, nature walkers.

H. Management

H1. Open the entire park for year-round use.

I. Land Use

I1. Provide wetland mitigation opportunities for the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation and other agencies.

I1.1 Develop a wetland mitigation banking program to guide future development of constructed wetlands.

I2. Determine the appropriate level of development and human carrying capacity.

I2.1 Establish a monitoring program for changes caused by recreational uses.

I2.2 Include crowding questions on future visitor surveys.

I3. Develop a plan to guide the transition of the park from haying and grazing to a recreation and educational park.

J. Cultural and Historical

J1. Interpret the cultural and historical uses of the site.

K. Funding

K1. Use the recreational and educational opportunities in the park, and agreements with other agencies and communities, to help offset costs for the park.

K2. Excavate gravel to create ponds and waterways and to help offset costs.

L. Staffing

L1. Hire and train interpretive and educational program staff.

L2. Encourage the increased use of volunteers in development and programs.

L3. Increase staffing to support year-round operation.